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ABSTRACT

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development undertook a 2-year project to assess non-school programs offered by various community-based youth organizations. This project included focus group interviews with youth about their current activities and preferences for after-school activities. Sixteen focus groups were conducted in the metropolitan Washington (District of Columbia) area attended by 135 White, Black, Central American, and Vietnamese male and female youth aged 11 to 15 years. All of the youth were from at-risk environments due to pervasive social and economic problems (violent crime, alcohol and drug abuse, poverty, and physical abuse). Several themes emerged as participants described how they spent their time when not in school. When programs that engage adolescents' interests are offered, adolescents will participate in them. Other themes include the need for adult role models, family support, and environments of respect and comfort. Boys are more likely to participate in non-school team sports and scouting programs, while girls are more likely to participate in religious youth groups and summer programs. Recommendations are provided for youth centers, staff, and programs. Appendixes A through D describe the study methodology, and provide the screener instrument, the moderator's guide, and the participant information sheet. Appendixes E and F present detailed findings from urban and rural groups. (SLD)

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What Young Adolescents Want and Need From Out-of-School Programs

A Focus Group Report

January 15, 1992

Submitted by:

S.W. Morris & Company

To:

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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I.

INTRODUCTION

Approximately 30 million young people participate annually in youth organizations, such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Boys and Girls, YMCA, YWCA, and Boys and Girls Clubs. Many other organizations, including religious groups, grassroots community organizations, libraries, museums, parks, and recreation departments offer programs geared toward youth. Despite the importance of such activities in young people's lives, very little formal study has been done to assess such programs, to determine what these groups do, the activities and services they offer, and their effectiveness in reaching youth.

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development has undertaken a two-year project to assess current non-school programs being offered by a variety of community-based youth organizations. The goals of Carnegie's Project on Youth Development and Community Programs are: to expand the scope and availability of developmentally appropriate, community-based services for young adolescents (ages 10-15), particularly those living in high-risk environments; and to enhance the public understanding and support of effective services for America's youth.

A component of this two-year project included the conduct of a series of focus groups with youth on their current activities and activity preferences during after-school hours. One hundred thirty-five youth participated in 16 focus groups conducted at sites throughout the greater metropolitan Washington, D.C. area. Participants ranged in age from 11 to 15 and represented several major racial and ethnic groups. White, black, Central American, and Vietnamese males and females participated.[1] Youth who were participants in community-based programs, as well as those who were not, were recruited.

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[1] Because the majority of participants recruited to represent Hispanic populations came from families that had immigrated from El Salvador, these groups are referred to as Central American. Similarly, because youth recruited to represent Asian Americans were recruited solely through an organization that assists Vietnamese families, these groups are referred to as Vietnamese.

Youth were drawn from a mix of urban and rural communities.[2] All were from environments that are typically considered at-risk because of pervasive social and economic problems, including violent crime, alcohol and other drug abuse, poverty, and physical abuse.

Youth were interviewed to elicit information about their lives, both in and out of school, about the activities offered in their communities or neighborhoods, and about their participation in such activities. Youth who did not participate in programs were asked to explain why this was so. Focus group discussion topics included:

- Activities adolescents pursue after school, on weekends, and during summer.
- Activity and content preferences.
- Importance of accessibility and adolescents' perceptions of accessibility.
- Factors that influence adolescent choices about use of non-school time.
- Popularity of co-ed or single-sex programming.
- Awareness of programs currently being offered in the community, attitudes toward these programs, and experiences in them.
- Characteristics of adult leaders whom they like and dislike.
- Characteristics of "ideal" programs, that is, programs that they would like to be offered.

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[2] To meet budgetary requirements and program design, youth were recruited from within a 90-mile radius of Washington, D.C. Although many outlying communities are now becoming more suburban, they are still remote, and youth living in them have experiences that are different from those of their urban counterparts. Close-in communities were also required to obtain the appropriate demographic mix. It was difficult to find minorities, especially Central American and Asian, living in rural areas.

Participants exhibited a range of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Their descriptions of "ideal" centers and adult leaders were most revealing, reflecting a diversity of interests and a range of concerns and desires. Many envisioned after-school organizations and facilities that would provide a myriad of services. Although facilities that approximate youths' ideal may exist within the Washington metropolitan area, focus group participants did not mention programs in which such a wide range of programs and services are provided.

Males described as their ideal full-service sports facilities that included fields for football, baseball, and soccer; golf courses, batting cages, swimming pools and arcades. Females described facilities that would also house shopping centers. Both sexes wanted dance clubs. Many also expressed a desire to have such facilities include libraries, counseling services or programs, and courses in subjects that ranged from job-skills to tutoring. In many groups, participants added that the facility should provide a haven from the pressures and fears to which many youth are exposed daily, especially crime in urban areas.

Participants described the ideal staff for this facility as being adults and teenagers who are concerned about young adolescents' needs. Most wanted younger adults (between the ages of 16 and 25) who would be attuned to teenagers, as well as older and more experienced adults who would provide program stability and who would draw from the benefits of their own experience. Many youth wanted leaders with whom they could identify (for example, who speak their native language or who are from the same racial group). Above all, youth wanted adults whom they could trust and respect; who would teach, nurture, and guide them; and who would provide structure in their lives.

The focus group study indicates that services to urban and rural youth should be expanded to provide an effective after-school and out-of-school environment for these groups. As other studies on high-risk and at-risk youth have indicated, at-risk children and young people share the same basic hopes and fears as children from other socioeconomic groups. These young people need and deserve nurturing environments, escapes from the hazards of their daily lives, the attention and guidance of concerned and committed adults, and the support of their communities.

A CAUTION TO THE READER: USES AND LIMITATIONS OF FOCUS GROUP STUDIES

Marketers and advertisers have relied on focus groups since the 1950's as a way to gain insight into public perceptions about a variety of subjects, from mayonnaise to romance novels, from substance abuse to automobile safety. Focus groups usually

include eight or ten participants who, under the guidance of a skilled moderator, discuss a topic briefly, usually for a few hours.

Focus groups serve as a useful qualitative research tool for marketing and communications professionals. As researcher Judith Langer has written,

"Focus groups, in-depth interviews, and other qualitative techniques allow you to see people as they really are. . . . In some ways, qualitative research is better than survey research as a trend-spotting tool. With survey research, a researcher must suspect that a new trend is occurring in order to frame a question. In qualitative research, the researcher doesn't have to ask the right question. Respondents can volunteer what's on their minds."[3]

Even so, focus groups cannot replace more traditional survey methods in which results are statistically analyzed and extrapolated to be representative of entire populations. Instead, focus groups provide an opportunity to learn more about the behavior, attitudes, and experiences of small groups of individuals brought together to discuss a specific topic.

In focus groups, unlike quantitative research methods, respondents may influence one another. This is especially true with young people who are sensitive to what others think about them and who are often reluctant to disagree with the crowd. Responses are not independent, and questions may not be posed the same way in each group. In short, although a focus group is conducted within a controlled environment, the many variables affecting any group's response are not controlled.

Consequently, focus groups are frequently used in tandem with quantitative research methods or are used to develop survey instruments. Although focus groups cannot measure the extent of public opinion about a specific product or societal issue, they can provide insight about why people think as they do about a certain product or subject.

Focus group analysis is based on the moderator's recall of the discussion, his or her notes made immediately after the discussion, and audio- or videotapes of the sessions. The analysis is usually two-pronged, identifying the nature of respondents' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of the subject being discussed, and observing how they articulate this knowledge. The analysis is not designed to report on the opinions of

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[3] Langer, J. (1991, February). Focus groups. American Demographics, p. 38.

the majority of participants, but rather, to report on the insights gleaned from *all* participants.

With these caveats in mind, the reader should understand that this report does not provide a national survey and analysis of out-of-school activities in which youth participate; rather, it provides clues about why certain segments of the population participate in such programs while others do not, and about general characteristics in the lives and communities of these youths that may influence their participation.

II.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Several themes emerged as participants described how they spent their time when not in school. Adolescents' responses made clear that when programs that engage young people's interests are offered, young people will participate. The key for program planners, then, lies in maintaining, developing, and promoting programs that satisfy the criteria of young people. Planners must also insure that young people and their families are aware of programs and are able to participate in them. Current barriers to participation, such as access, cost, and lack of awareness, should be reduced or eliminated.

Several other themes emerged throughout the discussions: youth need and want adult role models from whom to seek guidance and support; youth feel that their families and friends are very important; youth want and enjoy environments in which they can be themselves and be respected. These findings are consistent with qualitative and quantitative research studies, suggesting that in some respects, the lower socioeconomic status (SES) urban and rural youth recruited for this study are similar to youth across the country. In particular, themes that emerged were consistent with what S.W. Morris & Company has found to be true in other focus groups conducted with high-risk and hard-to-reach youth.

S.W. Morris & Company recently conducted 24 focus groups with 160 high-risk black, Mexican-American, white, and Native American boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 18. The focus groups provided a forum in which to evaluate effective communication strategies for disseminating health information to high risk youth outside of school. The focus group discussions highlighted the importance of developing comprehensive and integrated federal, state, and local programs to serve these youth and their families. The critical importance of family in youths' lives also became apparent; consequently, programs for youth must also involve their families. Youth repeatedly reported that they have a great deal of free, unsupervised time that affords them the opportunity to engage in risk behaviors; however, many expressed a desire to have more contact with positive adult role models, and with adults to whom they can talk. Many also expressed a desire for facilities in which they can feel safe or protected from the social problems in their communities and homes.

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In a similar study, Morris & Company conducted 21 focus groups with 143 African American youth in seven of America's top black media markets. Although the primary objective of these groups was to determine youth knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding alcohol and other drugs, information about these children's everyday lives was also obtained. These children, like those in other focus group studies, discussed the importance of family, church, and community in their lives. Despite the risky and frequently dangerous situations to which they are exposed (e.g., gang violence, drug abuse, drug trafficking), many of the younger children had avoided the temptation of criminal or illicit activities. Many described their "wishes and worries." The former included raising families, owning homes, and "stopping the violence." The latter revolved around the crime and violence, frequently perpetrated by gangs, in their neighborhoods; the lure of alcohol and drugs; and the possibility of becoming parents while they themselves are still children. For these children, the opportunity to becoming involved in community-sponsored activities may offer a first step in realizing their wishes and in limiting their worries.

In the Carnegie focus group study, young people[4] responded to a range of questions in which they were asked to describe how they spend their time when not in school; the kinds of programs or activities in which they participate, either formally or informally; the kinds of programs in which they are interested in participating; and the characteristics of adults with whom they most like to interact.

HOW TIME IS SPENT AFTER SCHOOL

After-School and Weekends

In both age groups, boys were primarily involved in community- or school-sponsored sports or in playing games with friends. These activities occurred after-school and on weekends. On weekends, boys also went to the movies, visited family and friends, and played at video arcades. Younger boys enrolled in a parochial school also participated in a choir and a drama club. Only older boys listed part-time work as an after-school or weekend activity. Rural black males also noted a community program, Career Capers, through which they learn about jobs and careers.

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[4] Throughout this report, "younger" refers to participants who were 11- or 12-years old, "older" refers to those who were 13-, 14-, or 15- years old.

In both age groups studied, girls were less likely than boys to express an interest in participating in organized athletics, although they were likely to play games informally, primarily rollerskating and jump-roping. Some older girls mentioned playing basketball, softball, and volleyball. Girls were far more interested in socializing, talking on the telephone, or hanging out with friends than were boys. For younger girls, going to a shopping mall also presented a form of socializing -- they can eat, walk around, and try on clothes.

Rural males mentioned participating in church-sponsored weekend activities far more than did their urban counterparts; however, this may have been because rural males were recruited through a program called Christians Involved Together with Youth (CITY). Urban boys enrolled in a Catholic school also noted that they participated in church-sponsored activities.

Rural girls participated more frequently than their urban peers in organized sports, including cheerleading. Although rural Central American girls mentioned participating in sports activities, such as soccer, none of their urban counterparts did. Rural black females also enjoyed rollerskating at a local rink.

Older girls, especially Central Americans, had more responsibilities in the home than boys -- babysitting younger siblings and helping with household chores, such as grocery shopping, doing laundry, and cleaning.

Vietnamese girls liked more introspective activities, especially reading than other girls. Rural black females also noted that they enjoyed writing stories, reading, and keeping journals. Vietnamese males, unlike any other group of males, included reading, going to church, doing math, and going to the library as activities they enjoyed.

Other Studies

These findings are consistent with other studies, including the 1988 National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), a nationally representative sample of 25,000 eighth-graders, which indicates that boys are twice as likely as girls to participate in non-school team sports and in scouting programs. Girls are more likely to participate in religious youth groups and summer programs. Gender differences, indicating that girls spend more time socializing and fulfilling household responsibilities, such as chores and babysitting, are consistent with findings from other studies.

Community- and School-Sponsored Activities

Boys in both age groups participated in a range of organized activities, primarily sports programs offered by community organizations, schools, churches, and recreation programs. Rural boys also mentioned 4-H clubs. Some white rural males mentioned that they had participated on a committee to establish a community center.

Urban and rural boys played on a significant number of community- or school-sponsored athletic teams including soccer, baseball, hockey, tennis, and lacrosse, and swimming. Among urban Central American males, the clear preference was for soccer; many boys in this group said that they would play soccer regardless of whether or not their friends played.

The majority of younger girls were not involved in organized activities, citing a lack of transportation to and from such programs as a barrier. Others were unaware of programs in their communities. A few younger girls, however, mentioned participation in clubs such as 4-H and in a church-sponsored youth group. Very few had participated in Girl Scouts; former participants had stopped because the program was no longer being offered in their community.

Although many older girls did not participate in community-sponsored programs (none was involved in an organized sport), they were very articulate about the kinds of programs in which they would like to participate. Specifically, they mentioned programs in which they can learn to swim, dance, skate or dive; acquire various domestic and crafts skills; and receive tutoring and learn job skills. Although they did not participate in such programs, these girls were aware of some programs, such as Boys and Girls Clubs, and courses such as those offered to teen-age mothers and an English class for non-English speakers, in their communities. Some had participated in Girl Scouts, and some were involved in a church group.

Rural black girls did not particularly care for organized activities, stating that they would simply prefer to meet boys. Vietnamese girls rarely participated in community-sponsored programs, citing lack of knowledge about and transportation to programs as barriers. Not only did the younger Vietnamese girls not participate in such activities, but they were hard-pressed to name activities in which they might be interested.

Other Studies

The NELS study revealed that 71 percent of respondents overall and 60 percent of lower income respondents reported some degree of participation in organized, out-of-school activities. The level of participation in non-school activities was lower for the focus group participants primarily because participants were recruited to represent adolescents who do not join activities.

Summer Activities

In addition to on-going weekend and after-school activities, boys of all ages mentioned taking family vacations, visiting friends, and attending sports camps. Older boys occasionally mentioned part-time jobs and attending parties; older urban black males mentioned part-time work. In general, urban and rural boys described similar activities in which they participated.

Younger girls described activities that centered on home and family and that often involved friends, e.g., taking vacations, going to the beach, and making day trips. They were primarily interested in going to local amusement parks, which represented to them an opportunity to meet boys.

Although older girls were involved in many of the same kinds of activities as younger girls, they more frequently mentioned organized programs, such as camps and summer school (ceramics and computer classes). One girl had participated in an engineering program at a local college, which had cemented her desire to attend college.

Other Studies

Very little is known about how young adolescents spend their time during the summer; few other studies have examined this question.

ACTIVITY PREFERENCES

Among boys of all ages the overwhelming preference was for athletic activities. However, the younger males who attended Catholic school were primarily interested in meeting girls. All boys expressed little or no interest in community service or fine arts lessons. Rural boys expressed some interest in social activities.

No clear activity preferences emerged among rural and urban girls, although the majority was interested in socializing. Younger girls were primarily interested in being with friends, either hanging out or going shopping with them. In one rural group, girls said that they preferred athletics. Rural black girls expressed a preference for "going to new places." Community service and fine arts classes were dismissed by most.

Among older girls no clear preference emerged. They were not as unanimously interested in socializing as were younger girls. Several expressed a desire to work part-time. Community service was among their least-favored activities.

Other Studies

The focus group participants provided some information consistent with findings from other studies which have indicated that youth are attracted to non-school activities that provide "fun" and "friends." Boys' interests in sports activities and girls' interests in a wider variety of activities have also been indicated by other studies.

The lack of perceived interest in community service is consistent with at least one study, conducted by Louis Harris for Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., which revealed that 60 percent of young people (grades four through twelve) would not be willing to participate in what is termed "national service," or volunteering to serve their country for one year. However, a recent Independent Sector survey of adolescents ages 14 to 17 indicated that 58 percent currently volunteer an average of 2.3 hours each week in community service activities. This survey also indicated that teens are four times as likely to volunteer when specifically asked to do so than when they are not.

Focus group participants' desire to work part-time has also been corroborated by other studies.

ISSUES REGARDING PARTICIPATION

How They Learn About/Decide to Join Organized Activities

All groups relied on similar information sources: parents and friends, and announcements in schools, recreation centers, or churches. However, one older boy mentioned that he had received a letter inviting him to try out for a school-sponsored sports team. Older boys also mentioned reading information in newspapers.

Both sexes described similar factors that affected participation. Programs that were easily accessible, had few requirements for participation or memberships, and that cost little or nothing were most likely to draw participants.

Many youth would only participate in programs with their friends -- to join alone was too daunting a prospect. However, some rural males felt that the presence of friends inhibited their own performance; they said that friends were a distraction or demanded too much attention.

Central American females seldom participated in organized activities. Thus, they had no frame of reference for responding to these questions.

Other Studies

Few studies have assessed <u>how</u> young people learn about organized non-school activities, although young people are frequently asked <u>why</u> they participate. The finding that young adolescent males enjoy the teamwork afforded by sports activities is consistent with a recent study by Seefeldt and Ewing for the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association.

Publicizing Programs

Urban and rural youth felt that one of the best methods for delivering information about community programs was word-of-mouth, either from friends or trusted adults. Younger boys and girls relied primarily on posters and announcements in school, although one group suggested that a celebrity, such as Michael Jordan, promote an activity. Older boys and girls suggested that additional channels, specifically television and radio for boys, and television and magazines for girls, be used to promote programs.

Why They Participate

Most youth participated in programs for the personal or social benefits (e.g., pursuing their own interests, making new friends, being with current friends) of doing so. Younger boys were more likely to say that they participated in athletic programs simply because they enjoyed the sport. Older boys, however, gave additional reasons, noting that they liked being with friends. Several boys mentioned that they enjoyed the teamwork involved in organized sports. Some described a summer camp where "we had to work together to solve problems."

Younger girls were less likely to participate in organized programs and thus could not offer reasons for doing so. Older girls tended to participate because their friends did. Those older girls who did not participate in activities gave reasons such as not knowing anyone else or being afraid to ask for information.

Encouraging Others to Participate

Boys would encourage friends to participate by describing the advantages of the program being offered, the rewards of participating, and the fun involved in playing sports. Girls would use similar tactics, telling friends that they would like the activity and that it is was fun. One girl would add, "I'll be there."

GENDER SEPARATION

Younger boys were more likely to prefer same-sex programs, especially because of their perception that girls are poor athletes. However, they were frequently ambivalent about this decision, feeling that same-sex programs were sexist. Many felt that co-ed social programs would be acceptable, although sports activities must be same-sex.

The older boys were seemingly more mature in their reasons for preferring co-ed programs saying, "We need to be together with girls," and "We need to understand them and get their respect." They did, however, prefer same-sex sports.

Girls tended to favor same-sex programs, but for different reasons. Younger girls preferred same-sex programs because they believed that boys were disruptive. They also expressed self-consciousness in the presence of boys, fearing that they would be embarrassed, especially in athletics. Finally, they did not want to participate in sports

with boys. When asked to describe an all-girl program, however, younger girls were at a loss, although one group said that such a program would consist of "girl talk."

Older girls also preferred same-sex programs but for completely different reasons than those given by boys -- girls wanted to discuss health and sexuality, especially birth control, menstruation, and reproduction. They stated that they would feel uncomfortable discussing these subjects with boys.

There were few differences among racial or ethnic groups, although Central American females were the most likely among the female groups to prefer co-ed activities.

Other Studies

Although few studies have asked boys and girls about their preferences regarding same-sex and coeducational programs, the focus group discussions on this subject are consistent with a larger body of literature on sports participation and on gender issues in adolescence. Boys' perceptions that their sports skills surpass those of girls, and that sports programs should therefore be same-sex, are consistent with research indicating that boys' physical skill levels are higher than those of girls in all areas except balance. However, research also indicates that this is true because boys become involved in sports at earlier ages than do girls and that boys drop out less frequently than do girls.

Older girls' preferences for opportunities to have single-sex programs for other activities, primarily to discuss "women's issues," are consistent with findings (Maccoby, Gilligan, Tannen, and others) that indicate that the different socialization patterns of boys and girls before adolescence lead to dramatic differences in patterns of communication and interaction in adolescence and adulthood. Girls' perceptions that their female peers share the bond of a common experience at puberty, are better listeners, and are less disruptive in groups, may be consistent with research.

CONTENT PREFERENCES

Urban and rural boys expressed some interest in receiving help with homework. Surprisingly, despite the current thrust toward multicultural education, very few urban black youth were interested in learning about their cultural heritage. Rural females often expressed a preference for helping others; no preferences emerged among urban females.

Younger boys expressed a greater interest than older boys in health and sexuality education, in receiving help with homework, and in learning job skills. Counseling, fine arts lessons, and community service were universally dismissed.

Older boys expressed various levels of interest in most of the content areas presented. Some were interested in receiving help with homework, learning job skills, participating in sports, learning self-defense, and learning leadership skills. Once again, counseling, fine arts lessons, and community service were roundly dismissed.

Many felt that counseling was inappropriate, that adults are often "two-faced." Most adolescents were unaware of the strict confidentiality in which counseling is offered. Boys in a rural community said, "Keep your business to yourself. This town is too small." Some dismissed self-defense programs, saying, "If you are a black man in Washington, D.C., you know how to handle violence."

Despite their seeming rejection of counseling services, many boys would later describe ideal adult leaders as people who would listen to them and in whom they could confide. They described an ideal center as a "caring place," staffed by people who listen, who talk to youth about their problems, and who relate well to young people.

Younger girls expressed no content preferences, although many, especially in rural groups, favored helping people, contradicting their earlier disinterest in community service. However, they perceived community service as "cleaning up," not as helping others. Homework, health and sexuality education, counseling, learning to lead, and learning self-defense skills were generally rated lowest among choices offered.

Older girls frequently mentioned an interest in helping others and in having someone to talk to about family or personal matters. They were less interested in receiving help with homework, learning self-defense, or taking fine arts lessons.

Other Studies

The seriousness of the concerns expressed by focus group participants (e.g., information about birth control, desire to having trusting, caring adults available to them) is consistent with other studies in the professional literature. A study conducted by the Youth Values Project in the late 1970's revealed that young people placed a higher value on getting good grades, preparing for their futures, and getting along with their families than they did on more immediate issues, such as having fun, having sex, or using drugs and alcohol. A newly released survey from the American Board

of Family Practice confirms the seriousness of adolescents' concerns, which include education, crime, AIDS, and other health issues.

ADULTS WHO RUN PROGRAMS

All youth, regardless of age or gender, cited similar attributes in an ideal leader: nice, funny, generous, well-organized, a good listener, and a fair and non-discriminatory person. He or she should share young people's interests and should be understanding. Young people did not want leaders who were abusive, unfair, exclusionary, or who singled out people and humiliated them. Boys often added "a good coach" or "teaches by example" as attributes. Older girls frequently added that this person should help them with problems.

Many Vietnamese expressed a desire for a leader of the same ethnic group or origin and who speaks the same language. Vietnamese females preferred programs led by females. Older Central American males preferred bilingual leaders of either sex. Other boys were fairly unconcerned about the leader's gender or race. If the person met the boys' criteria for a good leader, other factors were irrelevant.

Only older black males added the caveat that leaders should not be homosexual, a trait with which many are uncomfortable. Some veiled references were made to not wanting "people who eat dogs" as leaders, a statement that may reflect the racial tension between blacks and Koreans in Washington, D.C.

There was some disagreement among all young people regarding the ideal age for adult leaders -- a younger person was perceived as being more energetic, better able to demonstrate athletic techniques, and more likely to understand young people's concerns and feelings. However, an older adult was perceived as being more reliable and more experienced.

Help at School

Most youth turned to similar resources: teachers, counselors, principals, parents and other relatives, and friends.

Other Studies

The findings that youth need to have sustained contact with nurturing adults would appear to be consistent with a large body of research that documents the decreased amount of access that most teens have to parents and to other adult role models, and the developmental needs of young adolescents for structure, guidance, and limits in their lives.

IDEAL CENTER

Essentially, the ideal center would be comprehensive, meeting the diversity of adolescents' needs, interests, talents and ambitions. The greatest difference in descriptions of such a center emerged among urban and rural youth. Urban youth more frequently expressed a desire to be in a safe place, one free from violence.

Younger boys had a fairly limited vision of an ideal center; their suggestions focused primarily on being offered all sports and associated amenities, including a golf course, a large pool, and a batting cage. They would also like a video arcade, a movie theater, and opportunities to meet girls. Some also mentioned a desire to receive help with family problems.

In addition to a fully equipped sports center, older boys included other features, such as a dormitory, a study room, a hobby room, and a dance club. They would also like an up-to-date teen club with parties.

Urban black males were very concerned that a center be staffed by caring and nurturing individuals, and that it offer counseling, role models, and support services. Some suggested names for such a center: a summer camp called "Father's Home" and "A Love Place -- a place where there is no killing." Despite their earlier insistence that they were not interested in talking to someone about family or personal matters, many older boys expressed a desire for a caring atmosphere, adults who listened, and a secure environment.

When specifically asked, younger girls expressed little interest in counseling; however, their version of an ideal center would include "someone to talk to about problems and feelings." The center would be a "place to keep kids off the streets." Younger girls would also like various sports activities (although they do not appear to participate in organized sports), dances, and outings.

Older girls' opinions were much more varied in the range of components their center would offer, everything from pets to tutoring. They would like to have classes on cooking, cosmetology and how-to-dress, acting, and sewing, as well as programs providing job skill training. They would include a community service element, such as holding fundraisers to help the poor. They would offer "all-woman" programs at which they can discuss "girl things like your period, sex, boys, birth control and condoms." Central American and Vietnamese girls, some of whom were recent immigrants, expressed interest "in learning how to live in America."

Other Studies

Work by Medrich, Pittman, and the Center for Early Adolescence has documented the needs of young adolescents for a wide variety of activities, for opportunities to learn new skills, for a high degree of autonomy and choice, and for a sense of "place" and belonging.

III.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These findings point to adaptations and innovations in youth programs that might encourage more young people -- and greater numbers of younger adolescents -- to participate. The following recommendations stem from themes that emerged consistently across groups: Youth are willing to participate in out-of-school activities that are tailored to their specific interests and developmental and cultural needs. These recommendations serve as guideposts to program planners seeking to improve or adapt existing programs or to develop new ones. They are not grouped in order of priority but rather grouped by areas of interest.

For the many organizations that now successfully recruit and retain young people in scores of programs, these recommendations may simply reinforce concepts already realized in their programming. For those organizations seeking to recruit adolescents from diverse socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds, however, these recommendations may point to new program directions, serving as a springboard from which future programs can be derived.

Youth organizations currently strive to involve all youth, but are frequently stymied in their efforts by barriers such as cost, transportation, and lack of publicity. By reducing these barriers, and by appropriately addressing the needs of diverse populations, community-sponsored youth programs may come to broaden their scope of services, becoming at once more inclusive and more responsive.

YOUTH CENTERS

Develop Comprehensive Centers That Integrate Services

Today's young people, children of a multimedia society, are skilled at absorbing information from a variety of sources simultaneously. Their interests are truly varied, as reflected in the range of activities in which focus group participants said they would like to participate. When asked to describe the kinds of programs that should be offered at an ideal recreation center, boys did not simply want playing fields. They wanted full-service sports complexes replete with golf courses, batting cages, swimming pools, weight rooms, video arcades, and dance clubs. They offered a

range of suggestions, some fantastic and expensive, others more simple and less costly. Similarly, girls wanted not only a place to socialize, but eateries, dorms, clothing stores, and a range of classes, from the development of job skills to how-to-dress; they would also like a place that would combine much-beloved shopping malls with an opportunity to engage in a host of activities.

Some suggestions were fairly simple and perhaps could be more immediately realized. Most young people wanted a center staffed by caring adults who listen to and respect young people, a place that makes them feel safe and protected, a place where they can "be themselves." The center should offer a range of programs, such as organized sports and classes on a variety of subjects.

Although, when specifically asked, young people said they were not interested in being offered counseling services at such a center, they repeatedly spoke of their desire to talk to caring adults who can offer them advice and help them with problems. The center should offer counseling, but counselors should reassure young people about the confidentiality of the counselor-client relationship, allaying young people's fears that trust will be compromised.

Many young people reported participating in family-centered activities at various times throughout the year. The ideal center, then, should include family programs – perhaps father-daughter cooking classes or family camping trips. At the very least, family participation should be encouraged and promoted. Parents could be recruited as coaches or asked to volunteer in center activities.

STAFF

Train Program Leaders to be Truly Responsive to the Needs of Young People

Working with young people can be at once challenging and rewarding, in part because young people have very rigid demands of the adults with whom they interact. Ideally, leaders of youth programs must possess a range of interpersonal skills. Above all, they must be kind, nurturing, consistent, trustworthy, and genuinely interested in young people. Ideally, leaders should create a welcoming and nurturing atmosphere. Many young people expressed a dread of being singled out, excluded, or embarrassed. Many minority youth also expressed concern that leaders not discriminate against them.

Although they did not call them this, the youth expressed a need for adult role models who could guide them, nurture them, and provide structure in their lives. Many expressed a desire for adults whom they can trust, who respect them, and who can teach them to "do the right thing."

Many of today's program leaders satisfy these criteria. Even so, youth organizations may want to offer training programs in which leaders can develop or hone their interpersonal and group facilitation skills, such as communicating, listening actively, and leading discussions.

Staff Programs with Individuals Who Can Address the Ethnic and Bilingual Needs of Specific Youth Populations

Many non-native speakers of English expressed a desire for bilingual leaders who can help them to learn English. Vietnamese youth particularly said that they would prefer leaders from their own country. Central American males wanted bilingual male or female leaders, although Central American females preferred bilingual female leaders. Although some black youth said that they would prefer black leaders, others felt that this was unimportant, they simply wanted good leaders.

Recruit Leaders Who Represent All Ages

Young people did not necessarily prefer adults from any particular age group. On the other hand, they enjoyed being led by young people (i.e., older high school and college-age students) because they were perceived as being energetic and more attuned to youth's interests. Older adults (older meaning anyone between the ages of 25 and 70) were perceived as having more experience and, thus, more wisdom. They were also viewed as being more dependable.

Programs may want to consider engaging pairs of leaders, perhaps an older adult as a coach, for example, and a younger adult as an assistant coach.

PROGRAMS

Address the Serious Concerns of Today's Adolescents

Youth repeatedly expressed concern about social issues with which a previous generation of 11- or 13-year-olds might not -- developing job skills, learning about birth control and handling sexual relationships, and coping with violence. Because these youth appear to be growing up so early, organized activities must "grow-up" with them and they must address issues that young people are facing.

Provide Structured Yet Flexible Programs

Youth were interested in participating in organized activities. However, they frequently expressed a dislike of adults who are bossy and demanding, and who require youth to do things that they do not want to do or are not capable of doing. Similarly, young people wanted to be involved in programs, but they wanted to have a sense of ownership within those programs, or to have a sense that the programs presented them with choices. For example, many youth enjoyed participating in church and community-sponsored trips to amusement parks, trips that provided structure while affording youth an opportunity to pursue their own interests.

Make Programs More Accessible

Transportation difficulties in getting to and from organized activities were frequently cited as a reason for not participating in them. Thus, organizations should strive to establish programs in locations that are readily accessible to youth and that do not require transportation by a parent or other adult. Programs should be located in neighborhood centers, such as recreation centers, elementary schools, or sports parks. Organizations should also consider providing transportation to and from activities or expanding any services they now offer.

The majority of the focus group youth expressed an <u>interest</u> in participating in organized programs; factors such as transportation, proximity and cost often created barriers to such participation. Groups should work to eliminate or reduce these barriers, and funders should recognize that transportation is an important cost of doing business.

Encourage Youth Not to Feel Intimidated When Learning New Skills or Developing Talents

Youth consistently expressed little interest in music, art, and dance courses, often because they believe they were not accomplished at these activities. Seemingly, they are intimidated when presented an opportunity to learn a new skill or develop a talent. Organizations offering fine arts programming should recognize and address this misconception.

Offer Youth an Opportunity to "Show What They Know"

Youth frequently said that they were not interested in a particular activity (such as dance lessons) because they already possessed a particular skill. An opportunity exists for program planners to parlay these skills into the foundations of community service. Young people who know how to dance might be encouraged to teach other young people. Talented athletes might serve as coaches for younger teams. In so doing, youth will develop leadership skills, as well as a certain level of confidence in their own abilities.

Clearly Define Community Service Within the Context of Youth Programs

When asked, young people were not interested in performing community service, which they believed to involve only cleaning up after others. Nonetheless, many young people expressed a desire to help others. Their ideas about how they might accomplish this were fairly vague (e.g., hold fundraisers for the poor). This altruistic spirit could be tapped and used to encourage young people to participate in a variety of community service and community action programs. Planners should clearly define community service within the context of their programs, and the rewards and challenges to be attained in such work. They should also expect youth to play an active role in planning the types of community involvement efforts in which they will participate.

Acknowledge and Address Gender Differences

Although many youth expressed a preference for co-ed programs, others clearly felt a need for at least some single-sex programming. Boys and girls were very interested in socializing with one another, but they were less interested in competing with one another, especially on the playing field. Boys overwhelmingly felt that girls should

not participate in organized sports with them, primarily because they did not perceive girls as being good athletes. (An occasional boy would allow a girl who excelled at a particular sport to participate.) Similarly, girls did not want to participate in boys' games in which they might be embarrassed. These behaviors are influenced by a range of cultural and societal norms that cannot be easily changed.

In contrast to the boys, whose primary concerns were in same-sex athletics and co-ed social programs, girls were interested in having an opportunity to talk about "girl things," to participate in "all-woman" programs in which they could openly discuss health, interpersonal relationships, and emotions.

Thus, organized programs should offer activities that are both single-sex and co-ed. The same-sex programs, rather than encouraging sexist behavior or sexism, should be presented as opportunities for each sex to develop or acquire new skills in an unthreatening environment. At the same time, programs should work to influence the cultural and societal norms that perpetuate sexist behavior, stereotypes, and attitudes.

Address Issues of Violence and Safety

Many young people, especially those in urban areas, expressed a very real and serious concern for their personal safety. All activities offered to youth must guarantee their safety. Programs must be perceived as -- must in fact be -- a refuge from the violence that now permeates many of America's metropolitan areas and so, too, the lives of many inner-city and urban youth.

Work With Churches To Develop and Conduct Programs

Organized religion continues to play an important role in youths' lives. Many youth mentioned either attending church or participating in church-sponsored teen activities. Thus, youth programs should cooperate with churches, working with them to develop, promote, and conduct activities.

Develop Appropriate and Effective Publicity Materials

When marketing their programs, organizers must be certain that mass media materials are clear and direct, that they provide useful and easily understood information, and that they are appropriate to the audience being targeted. All materials should be designed so that following questions can be readily answered:

- Who is the target audience? Is it parents, children, youth, educators, or other program planners?
- How will the product be distributed?
- Is the distribution plan effective?
- Are there other organizations or channels through which the material can be distributed?
- Do similar materials already exist? Can they be adapted to supplement the current project?
- Are the materials attractive? Easy-to-understand? Is all information correct?
- Is the sponsoring organization clearly identified?

Address Publicity to Parents

The majority of youth learned of programs from their parents. Organizations should work with the media to promote their activities to parents and to encourage them to enroll children. Public service announcements on radio and television could be used, for example, as could paid advertisements in local newspapers.

Publicize Programs Through the Schools

School was frequently cited as a source of information. Thus, programs should work with the schools to publicize activities and to recruit young adolescents. For example, schools may be willing to sponsor an "After-School Fair" at which local organizations, such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs, Girls Incorporated, YMCA, YWCA, Camp Fire, and recreation centers, present information and provide opportunities for adolescents to enroll.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further studies may offer additional insight about how best to develop, promote, and conduct after-school, weekend, and summer programs that target at-risk youth. Specifically, focus groups with leaders of community-sponsored programs, such as Boy Scout and Girl Scout troop leaders, Boys and Girls Club coaches, and staff from social service programs, would provide the Carnegie Council with further depth in understanding and assessing community-based programs. Leaders could be asked to discuss what characteristics they consider to be essential for a "good leader." Discussions with these people, whose interactions with young people are frequent and personal, may offer additional clues about what is currently working in programs, what is not, and how other young people can be encouraged to participate.

Parents should be included in focus groups to determine whether or not they are encouraging their children to participate in programs, to evaluate what parents need or expect from these programs, and to learn how parents might be encouraged or enabled to become involved.

Focus groups should be conducted with youth from higher socioeconomic groups to determine whether or not the opinions expressed by lower SES youth are unique to their socioeconomic situation or whether or not other young people share their concerns.

Focus groups should be conducted in other geographic areas, such as the Northeast, the South, the Midwest, and the West, to ensure that these findings can be corroborated by youth across the country. These focus groups would uncover any anomalies in the findings from the greater metropolitan Washington, D.C., focus groups, and would offer the benefit of studying greater numbers of youth representing various demographic populations.

Research should be conducted to evaluate how youth are recruited for after-school, weekend, and summer activities. The effectiveness of these recruitment techniques should be evaluated.

Case studies of successful programs across the country should be made with the goal of using such programs as models for other communities. Case studies could evaluate the level of participation, the programs offered, the demographics of youth who participate, and a host of other variables.

A multifaceted study involving qualitative and quantitative research would yield the most complete picture of the state of school- and community-sponsored out-of-school programs and would point to strategies for improving existing programs and developing new ones to meet the needs and interests of all American youth. The focus group studies recommended would lead to hypotheses to be tested quantitatively by national surveys.

APPENDIX A

METHODOLOGY

During the spring and summer of 1991, S.W. Morris & Company conducted 16 focus groups with youth who had been recruited from the greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Focus groups were classified as being either urban or rural. Participants were from lower-income, white, black, Central American, or Vietnamese families and included males and females. All focus groups were led by skilled adult moderators; six of the nine urban groups were also led by peer moderators.

PEER MODERATORS

Trained moderators skilled in communicating with a variety of people lead focus group discussions. Often, when dealing with specific ethnic or racial groups, moderators from the same racial or ethnic group are chosen. Moderators are usually adults, regardless of the age group being interviewed. Because of their expertise in communicating with people, such moderators are usually able to draw out the feelings and opinions of adolescents.

At the suggestion of the Task Force planning group, Morris & Company recruited peer moderators to assist in moderating some of the focus groups. It was believed that the presence of these young people would encourage focus group participants to speak more freely and directly. Thus, peer moderators were included as part of the focus group design. Peer moderators of the same gender and ethnicity as the focus group participants were recruited to assist in six of the nine urban groups; none were recruited for the rural groups. Peer moderators were slightly older (between 16 and 18 years of age) than focus group participants.

Peer moderators were required to have had prior training in a peer program, i.e., leadership training or tutoring. The majority of peer moderators were recruited through a program at the Center for Population Options (CPO) in Washington, D.C. These peer moderators had received 60 hours of peer leadership skills training as part of their CPO Teen Council experience. The remainder were identified by guidance

counselors in the public school systems in Montgomery County, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.

Peer moderators were required to attend a three-hour training session with the adult moderators. This session provided an overview of the study, explained focus group methodology, reviewed the moderator's guide, and conducted a mock discussion. Peer moderators were required to attend and observe the focus group pre-test during which the moderator's guide and materials were tested. Although peer moderators were not paid for time spent in training, transportation costs to the mock discussion were covered and they were paid $6 per hour for each focus group that they co-moderated.

Ultimately, the presence of a peer moderator did not significantly alter the course of the discussion. Frequently, because the peer moderators were students who had assumed some sort of leadership role in their communities, they did not necessarily have a great deal in common with the participants. However, the Asian peer moderators did serve as translators with limited English proficient Asian participants.

SITES

The Task Force planning group recommended that all focus groups be conducted within one geographic area after examining the alternative research designs and budgets. Conducting all the groups within or near the greater Washington D.C. metropolitan area enabled Morris and Company to conduct the greatest number of groups within the budget constraints provided.

Identification of sites began in late February 1991. Because the focus group design required that groups be comprised of youth who did and did not participate in community-based programs, schools were identified first as possible sites, followed by community-based organizations.

Specific youth organizations were not targeted. A Boys & Girls Club advised that they were able to provide program participants for the groups but that they could not recruit the "non-participating" youth. Other organizations confirmed that they could only recruit from their own programs, hence would again be unable to provide "non-participating" youth. Some of the organizations contacted included the community programs, recreation departments, and other youth groups tied to county government programs, e.g., Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission.

Site Recruitment

Staff contacted organizations and institutions through which possible sites could be identified. Staff introduced the project over the telephone and those sites that expressed an interest were sent a detailed letter that explained the purpose of the study and outlined requirements for participation. This letter also advised on confidentiality, incentives, and recruitment procedures. A follow-up telephone call was then placed to the site contact in order to provide further information and to answer questions. At this point, sites either declined or confirmed participation. They also advised Morris & Company staff of any procedures necessary in order to obtain permission to conduct the study on-site.

Urban

Urban sites were more easily identified and participants more easily recruited than from rural sites. Originally, the District of Columbia was to be targeted for Central American and black groups, Northern Virginia and Montgomery County, Maryland, for Asian groups, and Montgomery County for white groups.

For the Central American and African American groups, several public and parochial schools as well as community organizations were identified and contacted. This process involved some delays. Originally, the Spanish Education Development (SED) Center had been identified as a possible source for participants. The SED Center was willing to participate but advised Morris & Company staff that its programs were for younger children. They suggested contacting the Latin American Youth Center. Staff at the Center were also willing to participate, but the Center's population was over the age of 15. Finally, Morris & Company staff contacted schools in the Adams-Morgan neighborhood of Washington, D.C. Oyster Bilingual Elementary School suggested that a specific office within the District of Columbia Department of Education be apprised of the study. Contact was made with this office, and approval received. Schools were then contacted and participation was swiftly confirmed. Public and parochial schools in Washington, D.C., served as sites.

Such good fortune did not follow with the Maryland and Virginia public schools in which staff had planned to conduct focus groups with a variety of ethnic groups. Although principals and guidance counselors were eager to participate, final

confirmation of participation in the study was lost in each school system's bureaucracy. In Montgomery County, the application date for research within the schools had passed; in Arlington, Virginia, school board approval was necessary to obtain the use of Wakefield High School (meetings held every other month). The Alexandria, Virginia, school system forwarded a research application to the Morris & Company. However, such application included a 6- to 8-week waiting period for a response. Although an initial phone call was placed and letter sent to the Prince George's County (Maryland) school system, follow-up calls were never returned.

To identify sites for the Asian American groups, Morris & Company contacted community organizations in Montgomery County, Maryland, and in Northern Virginia. Eventually, staff worked directly with a Montgomery County community-based organization, the Vietnamese Mutual Association. Consequently, Vietnamese Americans, who do not represent the opinions of other Asian American populations, were recruited.

Although many sites were identified for conducting the white groups, recruiting white participants presented a problem. The Washington, D.C., metropolitan area does not have a large lower-income white population. Although some lower-income whites live in rural areas in Northern Montgomery County, Maryland, project staff had missed the deadline to apply for research in the public school system.

One school in Washington, D.C., had a lower SES white population drawn primarily from surrounding military bases. However, the principal advised staff that he could only recruit "joiners," students who participate in various programs. After a 3-month search, a community-based prevention organization (BADGE -- Bowie Alcohol and Drug Group Effort) in Prince George's County was recruited to participate.

Focus group scheduling was extended because of Easter/Spring vacation. The vacation week was scheduled during different dates in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Schools advised Morris & Company that they would have to wait until students had returned from vacation to recruit participants and conduct the groups.

Rural

Because of the geographic limitations of the study, rural participants were not recruited from what might typically be considered rural areas, such as the Midwest. Instead, rural participants were sought from outlying regions of the Washington metropolitan area, such as Cumberland, Maryland, and West Virginia. Although such

participants may be exposed to suburban and urban norms and lifestyles, they represent rural communities, that is, communities that are remote, isolated, and that are frequently several hours drive from suburban or urban areas.

Initially, the Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee was contacted. Although the committee's executive director was confident about recruiting participants, his field staff reported that they could not accommodate the study because of the project's tight deadlines and the population involved. Also, there were no Central American students in their program.

Morris & Company staff contacted county school boards directly but repeatedly received refusals to participate -- one administrator did not want to overburden his staff (Carroll County); another was agreeable but his principals were not (Calvert County), and another was very interested in the study but not at that time (St. Mary's County).

It was difficult to identify a rural Hispanic population. Morris & Company staff requested demographic information on the Hispanic population in the counties within 90 miles of Washington, D.C. from State Departments of Education in Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia. In rural Maryland, almost no Hispanics were identified, although Asians were. In three West Virginia counties, there were fewer than 10 Central American or Hispanic students enrolled in the system. The Virginia Department of Education advised that most Northern Virginia schools (suburbs of Washington, D.C.) had Central American or Hispanic populations but suggested that Prince William County Schools, Virginia, be contacted.

Two of the three school systems in Prince William County, Virginia, rejected invitations to participate. However, they identified community-based organizations in the county that could be contacted for participation. This proved to be successful. Two focus groups were conducted using CITY (Christians Involved Together with Youth). Additionally, one Prince William County school system worked with Morris & Company through the Red Cross to conduct two focus groups in the schools in June and two groups in July with a summer school population.

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

Sites were advised to recruit ten lower-income participants for each focus group. Adult program leaders -- who work with youth daily, who know them well, and frequently know their families -- were asked to categorize participants as

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lower-income. Each group was to be comprised of equal numbers of youth who did and who did not participate in an organized after-school program. Morris & Company designed a screener, a short questionnaire to determine whether or not a potential participant met study criteria, that site staff used to recruit participants. A screener was completed on each participant. A sample screener is provided in **Appendix B.**

Sites were also advised that participants were required to speak and understand English. However, this requirement was not always met. The group of Central American males was conducted bilingually. In Vietnamese groups, peer moderators and fellow participants served as translators.

It was impossible to locate and recruit a rural Hispanic male group, ages 11-12, therefore an additional urban group was conducted. To recruit urban Hispanic males in this age group, Bell Multicultural High School, Washington, D.C., was contacted. It recruited youth from a soccer clinic sponsored by the D.C. Department of Recreation.

The tables on the following pages indicate various demographic data about participants.

CARNEGIE FOCUS GROUPS Combined Settings N = 135

Ethnicity	Male		Female	
	11-12	13-15	11-12	13-15
White	10	10	8	9
African American	17	19	7	9
Central American	9	10	5	6
Vietnamese	9	---	7	---
TOTAL	**45**	**39**	**27**	**24**

CARNEGIE FOCUS GROUPS Urban Setting N = 88

Ethnicity	Male		Female	
	11-12	13-15	11-12	13-15
White	10	---	---	9
African American	10	10	---	9
Central American	9	10	5	---
Vietnamese	9	---	7	---
TOTAL	**38**	**20**	**12**	**18**

CARNEGIE FOCUS GROUPS Rural Setting N = 47

Ethnicity	Male		Female	
	11-12	13-15	11-12	13-15
White	---	10	8	---
African American	7	9	7	---
Central American	---	---	---	6
Vietnamese	---	---	---	---
TOTAL	**7**	**19**	**15**	**6**

RURAL

GROUP	AGE	DATE	SITE/RECRUITING ORGANIZATION
Black Males	11-12	6/26	Christians Involved Together with Youth (CITY) Manassas, VA
Black Males	13-15	6/26	Christians Involved Together with Youth (CITY) Manassas, VA
White Males	13-15	6/12	American Red Cross - Manassas, VA
Central American Females	13-15	6/12	American Red Cross - Manassas, VA
Black Females	11-12	7/9	American Red Cross - Manassas, VA
White Females	11-12	7/9	American Red Cross - Manassas, VA

No Peer Moderators Used

URBAN

GROUP	AGE	DATE	PEER MODERATOR	SITE/RECRUITING ORGANIZATION
Black Females	13-15	3/15/91	Dionne	Bell Multi-Cultural High School, Adams Morgan, Washington, DC
Black Males	11-12	3/20/91	——	St. Benedict the Moor Catholic School, N.E., Washington, DC
Black Males	13-15	3/16/91	——	S.W. Morris (Participants recruited from KIDS IN TROUBLE, a prevention program in S.E. - Washington, DC)
Central American Females	11-12	4/15/91	Lupe	Ross Elementary School, Adams Morgan, Washington, DC
Central American Males	11-12	8/01/91	——	Bell Multi-Cultural High School Adams Morgan, Washington, DC
Central American Males	13-15	3/18/91	——	Bell Multi-Cultural High School, Adams Morgan, Washington, DC
White Females	13-15	5/15/91	Rachel	Bowie Alcohol Drug Group Effort (BADGE), Bowie City Hall, Bowie, MD
White Males	11-12	5/15/91	Andrew	Bowie Alcohol Drug Group Effort (BADGE), Bowie City Hall, Bowie, MD
Vietnamese Females	11-12	4/11/91	Lisa	Maryland Vietnamese Mutual Association, Rockville, MD
Vietnamese Males	11-12	4/11/91	Peter	Maryland Vietnamese Mutual Association, Rockville, MD

OVERVIEW OF FOCUS GROUP PROCESS

Each group was conducted by an experienced moderator whose role was to objectively guide the discussion, assure that all points were covered, and explore comments and nonverbal behaviors of the participants. Moderators referred to a guide located in Appendix C. The majority of the groups in an urban setting were co-conducted by a peer moderators. The rural groups were not conducted with peer moderators. The group process included the following components:

Introduction and Ground Rules

Moderator and peer moderator introduced themselves, discussed the purpose of the focus group, and presented ground rules for participation.

Discussion of How Time is Spent

The discussion covered how participants spent their free time after school, on weekends, and during the summer.

Activity Preferences

Each participant was given a set of activity cards (all cards were in the same order; each set included some blank cards). Participants were advised to review the cards and to add any activities that they felt were needed. Participants were asked to rearrange the cards so that the activity that they liked to do the most was first and to continue to order the cards so that the activity they liked least was on the bottom. Choices for Activity Preferences were athletics; playing video games; painting or drawing; taking music or dance lessons; listening to music/attending concerts; going to new places; hanging out with friends; providing services to the community; going to the mall; watching television; working at a part time job; talking on the telephone; being a spectator at sporting events; partying; and going to the movies.

Issues Regarding Participation

This topic area discussed community-based programs for young people in participants' communities, whether or not and why participants joined such activities, ways in which they had learned of programs, and tactics they would use to encourage others to join.

Content Preferences

This activity followed the same pattern as that of the Activity Cards. Content preference selections were getting help with homework, talking about family problems, having someone to talk about personal things, learning how to handle violence, learning how to handle stress, helping other people, learning job skills, learning self defense skills, learning how to be a leader, learning more about health and sexuality, and learning about [my] cultural heritage.

Adults Who Run Programs

The subject area covered participants' likes and dislikes regarding adults involved in programs for youth. Participants described characteristics of ideal adults leaders.

Conclusion

Participants were asked to list what programs they would provide if put in charge of a youth center.

At the end of each focus group, participants completed a Participant Information Sheet to provide data on their educational and community involvement. A sample Participant Information Sheet is provided in **Appendix D**.

Ethnicity
Gender
Age

Screener

Hello, we are organizing a group discussion to talk about the types of activities young people like to participate in when they are not in school. If you are interested in participating in a group discussion, I would like to ask the following questions.

1. What grade are you in?

   5 6 7 8 9 10 *(Circle one)*

2. Participation in Programs

   Do you participate in any organized programs or activities after school or on weekends?[5] *(Half of the group should answer yes and half should answer no.)*

   ___ Yes ___ No (Go to Question 3)

   If yes, please indicate type of program/activity: _____

   _____

   Where do you go to participate in this program/activity? _____

   _____

3. We are holding a group discussion on this topic on (date) at (time). The discussion will last approximately one and one-half hours. Refreshments will be served and you will receive a prize for participating. Would you be interested in coming?

   ___ Yes ___ No

4. The discussion will be held at (address). We will send you directions to our place. We look forward to seeing you on the (date).

2/26/91

[5]If student goes to a recreation or community center more than once a week, consider that as participation in a program.

AM - Adult Moderator
PM - Peer Moderator

Moderator's Guide

Carnegie Focus Groups

AM
PM

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm going to be leading our discussion today. We'll be here about 1½ hours so that we can talk about things that you like to do when you're not in school.

AM
PM

GROUND RULES

I'm not a teacher or a counselor. I'm a research consultant -- so I don't work for any company or any organizations or any agencies. I work for myself. I conduct research for different types of companies or organizations. I travel all over the country to find out what people think about products, services and ideas. For this study, we are collecting information about how young people spend their free time.

We've got a lot to cover, so we will all need to do a few things to get our jobs done. I'm taping the session so I can write a summary when we've finished talking.

1. Talk one at a time and in a voice at least as loud as mine.

2. I need to hear from every one of you during the discussion even though each person does not have to answer every question.

3. Feel free to respond to what has been said by talking to me or to any other members of the group. And, that works best when we avoid side conversations and talk one at a time.

4. I am looking for different points of view and I am interested in everyone's opinion. So, just say what's on your mind.

5. We do have a lot to share, so I may interrupt you at some point so that we can keep moving and avoid running out of time.

6. We value your opinions, both positive and negative, and I hope you choose to hang in here and express them during the discussion.

40

7. Finally, everything that is discussed is confidential. In the report that is written no one's name is used.

PM **SELF INTRODUCTIONS**

1. Let's go around the room and introduce ourselves by saying our name, age, and some of things you like to do most when you're not in school.

AM **HOW TIME IS SPENT**
PM

1. I'd like to start the discussion by talking about how you spend your free time after school and on the weekends.

   [Draw chart on easel ... one column for after school and one for weekends. Have participants identify how they spend their time.]

   [As the list is being created, identify those activities that are community-based/out-of-school.]

2. We have identified many different things that you do. I would like to focus the next part of this discussion on those activities that are sponsored by organizations in the community.

   [Choose the most popular activity from the list and discuss as follows.]

   a. How did you find out about this activity/program? [Probe for parents, teachers, other young people.]

   b. How important to you was it that people you knew were involved in the activity?

   c. Where do you go to attend the program? How often? What is it like there? [Probe for physical characteristics of the program facility.]

   d. What did you have to do to sign up? [Probe for any difficulties associated with joining.]

   e. Are there any requirements for staying in the program?

   f. Are there any programs that you used to participate in that you stopped going to? Why? (Probe for reasons such as lack of input into programming, comfort level and belonging, not being able to be a leader, etc.)

g. For those of you who do not participate in the program, can you tell me why?

3. I would like to focus the next part of this discussion on the other part of the list – those activities that are not sponsored by organizations in the community.

   a. How often do you do this activity?

   b. What is it that you like most about _____?

4. Are there any community-sponsored programs that we have discussed that would now be of interest to you? Why?

5. [Do same exercise for summer.] I'd like to make a list of the things that you did last summer. [Clarify that we are interested in "free time" activities.] [Probe for camps, travel——who sponsors, etc.]

   a. (For organized programs proceed as follows.)

      1) How did you find out about this program? [Probe for parents, teachers, other young people.]

      2) Where do you go to attend the program? How often?

      3) What did you have to do to sign up? [Probe for any difficulties associated with joining.]

      4) Are there any requirements for staying in the program?

      5) Are there any programs that you used to participate in that you stopped going to? Why?

   b. (For other activities)

      1) How often do you do this activity?

      2) What is it that you like most about _____?

   c. Are there any community-sponsored programs that we have discussed that would now be of interest to you? Why?

AM PM **ACTIVITY PREFERENCES**

1. I am going to give you some cards. On each card is the name of an activity that you might like to do. Each of you gets the cards in the same order. They are [show and read each card to the group]. Are there any activities that you would like to add? [If yes, write out additional activities on blank cards and add to the packet.]

   - Athletics
   - Playing video games
   - Painting or drawing
   - Taking music or dance lessons
   - Listening to music/attending concerts
   - Going to new places
   - Hanging out with friends
   - Providing services to the community
   - Going to the mall
   - Watching television
   - Working at a part-time job
   - Talking on the telephone
   - Spectator at sporting events
   - Partying
   - Going to the movies

2. Now, I would like you to take a few minutes to think about these and then rearrange them so that the activity that you would like to do most is first and then continue ordering the cards so that the one you would like to do least is on the bottom.

   When you are finished, put the rubber band around the cards.

   Okay, before I collect them, take a look at your top choice ...

   Why did you choose this activity?

PM **ISSUES REGARDING PARTICIPATION**

1. We've talked about things that you do after school, on weekends and during the summer. Now, I'd like to know if there are any other programs for young people that you know about in your community.

   [Write programs on easel.]

a. In general, how do think young people your age find out about programs that are not at school?

b. Why do you think some young people like to participate in these types of activities/programs and some don't? [Probe for accessibility, cost, personality traits, other responsibilities.]

c. What would you say to a friend of yours to try to convince him/her to join a program?

d. Do you think it makes a difference if the programs are just girls/boys?

e. Would you or your friends be more likely to participate in a program that was all boys/girls?

f. [FOR GIRLS ONLY]
What kinds of programs do you think should be designed for all girls? [Probe: What things do you want to learn?]

g. [FOR BOYS ONLY]
What kinds of programs do you think should be designed for all boys? [Probe: What things do you want to learn?]

h. What is the best way to get the news out about programs in the community? [Probe for channels, format, and who delivers the message.]

CONTENT PREFERENCES

1. I am going to give you some cards. On each card are some other types of activities that you might be interested in. Each of you gets the cards in the same order. They are [show and read each card to the group]. Are there any activities that you would like to add? [If yes, write out additional activities on blank cards and add to the packet.]

   - Getting help with homework
   - Talking about family problems
   - Having someone to talk to about personal things
   - Learning how to handle violence
   - Learning how to handle stress
   - Helping other people
   - Learning skills that can help me get a job
   - Learning self defense skills

- Learning how to be a leader
- Learning more about health and sexuality
- Learning about my cultural heritage

2. Now, I would like you to take a few minutes to think about these and then rearrange them so that the activity that you would like to do most is first and then continue ordering the cards so that the one you would like to do least is on the bottom.

   When you are finished, put the rubber band around the cards.

   Okay, before I collect them, take a look at your top choice ...

   Why did you choose this activity?

   Which activity did you rank last? Why?

PM **ADULTS WHO RUN PROGRAMS**
[Note: Interested primarily in adults at clubs, libraries, etc.]

1. Are there any adults, other than your parents, that you really like? Why do you like him/her? [Probe for personality traits.] [If participants say adult is "fun," probe for more precise meaning.]

2. What about an adult that you don't like? Why?

3. For those of you who have participated in organized programs, what do you think makes a good program leader? [Probe: personality traits, training, same ethnic background, same gender.]

4. Do you think people who run programs for young people your age should be older, like the age of your parents, or closer to your age, like an older sister or brother? [Probe for differences between adult leaders and teen leaders.]

5. **ONLY IF WE HAVE NOT GOTTEN THE INFORMATION FROM PREVIOUS QUESTIONS.**

   Are there people at your school that you go to if you have a problem? Why?

AM **CLOSE**

If you were in charge of a center, what would the center provide?

AM [Hand out participant information sheet.]

Participant Information Sheet

Please answer the following questions.

I. **Age**

10 11 12 13 14 15

II. **Grade in school (circle one)**

5 6 7 8 9 10 11

III. **What is the most important thing you learned in the past year?** _____

_____

_____

_____

Where did you learn it? _____

_____

_____

_____

IV. **Who do you go to talk to if you have a problem?** _____

_____

_____

Why? _____

_____

_____

_____

(over)

V. How important is it for young people to participate in out of school programs? (Please circle one answer.)

Not Important
A Little Important
Important
Very Important
Extremely Important

Why? _____

VI. Who do you think young people your age listen to and believe? _____

Why? _____

7. If you could do one thing to improve your community, what would it be? _____

8. If you could do or change one thing that would make your life better, what would it be? _____

APPENDIX E

DETAILED FINDINGS FROM URBAN GROUPS

HOW TIME IS SPENT AFTER SCHOOL

The moderator asked participants how they spent their time after school, on the weekends, and during the summer.

After-School and Weekends

Among males, sports dominated activities. Participants played on organized teams (baseball, hockey, lacrosse, and soccer), in neighborhood pick-up games, at recreation centers (basketball, pool, and ping-pong), and informally, with friends (bike riding, skating, marbles, and fishing). Central American males overwhelmingly preferred soccer.

Males mentioned traditional after-school activities such as doing homework, eating, playing around, hanging out, watching TV, listening to the radio, and going to the movies. Vietnamese and Central American males mentioned playing Nintendo. Older black males also included being with girls and "hanging out and acting stupid."

Other than sports, few males mentioned participation in organized activities. Younger black males enrolled in parochial school included choir practice and drama club.

For weekend activities, males listed a variety of sports, both organized and informal. The only non-sports organized activity was the choir practice attended by students in the parochial school. This group also mentioned playing arcade video games and visiting the go-cart track as favorite activities.

Other popular weekend activities included going to movies, seeing friends, and going to a mall. Vietnamese males listed going to church, going to the library, reading books, and doing math. Skateboarding was also of interest to Vietnamese males. Older black males mentioned sleeping late or all day or cleaning up.

Older Central American males mentioned weekend activities as being part-time jobs and visiting friends and relatives. Central American males participated in activities organized primarily through recreation centers. They also indicated watching television daily.

Females were not as involved in organized or team sports activities, although many mentioned that they participate in basketball, swimming, exercise, dance, ice skating, rollerskating, volleyball, and riding bikes/scooters.

All female groups mentioned homework, tutoring or studying; all mentioned some type of social activity such as playing outside or with friends and talking on the telephone. The majority of the white group mentioned doing homework, watching television, and talking on the telephone; this group also mentioned taking honors courses. ("Honors courses" were not defined.) Other ethnic groups mentioned doing homework, watching television, and talking on the phone. Black females included going to the recreation center and playing Double Dutch. Vietnamese girls mentioned reading books, playing Nintendo, and going to church. Central American girls included household chores, such as babysitting and cleaning.

Popular weekend activities among girls were generally shopping and movies, parties, and going to the park. White, black, and Vietnamese females listed church activities. Central American females added karate and organized sports. White females also mentioned doing chores, sleeping over at friends', camping, going to the beach, and going out to eat. In addition to these activities, blacks mentioned visiting and reading. Vietnamese girls mentioned seeing parades. When asked if they went to organized activities at church, Central American participants overwhelmingly responded "no."

Community- and School-Sponsored Activities

The discussion focused on community-sponsored activities. Several female groups indicated they had contact with Girl Scouts, but only one Vietnamese girl was a current member. The girls cited various reasons for having dropped out of Girl Scouts. Black females said such things as "the leader moved away," "our leader died," and "(I) don't like the new leader -- she's not as much fun -- not open, warm, funny, understanding." White females had dropped out of Girl Scouts because it was boring or because they had lost interest in it. Some Central American participants said they had belonged to Girl Scouts but the program was discontinued at school. When asked why they had wanted to join, they said they just liked it and had wanted to go swimming.

When asked to focus on activities they participated in that were sponsored by community organizations, white females mentioned Outdoor Explorers (a club), swim team, skating, band, basketball, and softball. Some also mentioned that they participated in religion classes or church activities. With the exception of occasional participation in Girl Scouts, Central American and Vietnamese groups said that they did not participate in organized community activities. Vietnamese females cited lack of knowledge and transportation as their primary reasons for not participating.

Male groups mentioned activities at school, community recreation centers, and other activities, particularly those that were sports related. Vietnamese males mentioned gym hockey and computer club.

Younger black males mentioned activities to which they had formerly belonged, saying, "I learned how to swim there (YMCA);" "It (Boy Scouts/Cub Scouts) fell apart; the leader wasn't doing it consistently; the leader didn't want to be the leader;" and "I earned my black Belt (karate) and there wasn't anything else to learn; they told me I was too rough and not to come back." In discussing community programs that were of interest to them, younger black males mentioned teen club (must be 13 to join), Kim Karate (it's for older boys), and recreation center football and basketball (must be a certain height, weight, age).

Older black males cited reasons why they had left various activities in which they had once participated. Boys Clubs were "too far from home to get to easily." One had switched to a basketball program and another had participated in an enrichment program (computer class, yearbook committee) that had lasted only one year. When probed about neighborhood activities, older black males mentioned a community basketball team, a junior high baseball team, and high school ROTC. This group in unison said the Boy Scouts "didn't exist."

Black females listed a variety of instructional programs that would be of interest, the most popular being swimming, diving, and dance skating. They expressed interested in handicrafts such as cooking international dishes, crocheting, doing hair, sewing, and self-help programs such as learning to study, typing, getting a job, and playing an instrument. They mentioned sports programs such as gymnastics and ice skating.

The requirements for participating in community-sponsored programs were seen as being easily met by some participants; for others, the requirements might better be described as barriers. For example, white females said that the requirements to sign up for Boys and Girls Clubs are easily met and included paying a fee; Outdoor Explorers also required a fee. For other lower SES groups, paying a fee may represent a problem; older black males cited dues for non-members of the Boys Club as a problem.

Black females cited additional requirements, saying that to stay in certain programs, "You can't miss more than three meetings." Another said, "You just have to be responsible -- like when babysitting, you can't be talking on the phone." Younger black males cited the need to maintain a "C" average to participate in school-sponsored activities.

Summer Activities

When asked how they spent their summer, white, black, and Vietnamese females mentioned camp; all groups mentioned some sort of travel or family vacations. Most named traditional summer activities -- swimming, going to the beach, sports activities, shopping, and being with friends.

Black females mentioned learning experiences that included ceramics and computer classes, as well as visiting and working at three different colleges and engineering classes; they also mentioned vacations, family reunions, and camps in Maryland and Virginia.

In addition to traditional activities, Vietnamese females mentioned summer school, reading books, writing stories, studying and writing a journal; they also mentioned watching television. Participants who went to camp participated in activities but could not provide details, such as where the camps had been located or how they had registered for them.

Several white females mentioned swimming, others mentioned going to the beach, and two mentioned work. One white participant participated in a two-week camp and another ice skates seven days a week. Other than white females, no other group mentioned any type of employment.

In addition to going places (area amusement parks and overseas travel, primarily to countries in which they still have relatives) and some sports (tennis and soccer), the Central American group's activities centered around the home.

All male groups mentioned some type of camp -- soccer, basketball, Boy Scout or church -- and travel. Older black and Central American males mentioned jobs.

Several younger black males attended camp and took trips out of state; summer jobs consisted of babysitting and yard work. Older black males had jobs which included yard or landscape work, children's museum guide, university janitor, and working in a T-shirt shop.

Other activities included a range of sports, particularly swimming, work-study programs (Central American), recreation centers, amusement parks, babysitting, picnics, and parks. In the older black group, one participant went to a free, medically supervised hospital camp; another described himself as a "couch potato."

ACTIVITY PREFERENCES

Participants were asked to sort 12 to 17 activity cards into what they would like to do most and least. No clear preferences emerged, which may be indicative of the variety of activities in which youth are interested.

Females

White females preferred athletics, especially competitive sports. Some cited taking music or dance lessons (to get away from problems, competition, they liked to sing, play the piano) and going new places. Fewer girls chose working part-time and going to camp.

Black females liked talking on the phone, hanging out with friends, watching television, and working at a part-time job. Their write-in choices included reading and writing stories.

Central American females favored parties ("because it's fun"; "because I like it"; "we play games"; "we go outside"; "we eat;" "I like to dance and play with my friends"). Some favoredathletics (soccer) and going new places ("I like to go to new places to learn about other people"). Going to El Salvador (from which many of the participants' relatives had immigrated) and Girl Scouts were also mentioned as things they would like to do.

Vietnamese females cited going new places, participating in athletics, playing video games, painting or drawing, listening to music, attending concerts, and movies.

Males

Males overwhelmingly chose athletics as their first choice, followed by meeting girls, a frequent write-in response. Younger black males explained that they needed to write-in meeting girls (they felt that going to the movies did not clarify what they went to the movies for -- to meet girls).

Males generally did not like taking music or dance lessons, listening to music/attending concerts, providing community service, and painting or drawing. They said they saw no value in least liked activities (dance/music lessons) and found it "embarrassing."

ISSUES REGARDING PARTICIPATION

How They Learn About/Decide to Join Organized Activities

All participants learned about community activities through teachers, parents, letters sent home, fliers, churches, coaches, and friends.

All groups generally agreed that they would prefer to have friends accompany them to activities or to know someone who was participating. Black females said it was "no fun" to go alone or not know anyone. Older black males agreed that if they went alone they stood the chance of "being an outcast" or being shunned.

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Most younger Vietnamese males said it was important to be involved in programs because most of their peers participated.

Central American males learned about programs through notices posted in school and on radio (Q- 107). They joined by asking the coach or recreation center leader.

Central American females seemed to have little frame of reference for participating in programs. They learned about programs from parents and school.

Vietnamese females learned about programs primarily from their parents, or from friends, school, and church.

Vietnamese males said they learned about programs through friends at school and, if they were interested, they would join. Some said they were afraid to join.

Older black males did not know of other programs in their communities.

Black females knew about programs in the community such as Boys and Girls Club, church trips and choirs, work programs, recreation center, and day care programs.

White males learned about programs from friends who were members, from fliers and advertisements, and in school.

White females learned about programs through school (posters, newspaper), friends, fliers, siblings, and parents.

When asked why they participated in activities, black females said programs were fun, their friends were there, and they liked the programs.

Several Vietnamese females gave fun as a reason; others had no opinion. When prompted, only two indicated interest in any special activity.

The reasons black females gave for not participating were that they didn't know anyone, the kids were too old and that they were afraid to ask for information. White females speculated that their peers don't participate because they are shy, anti-social, lack self confidence or their parents won't let them.

White males speculated that the reason some boys did not join was because they were not as athletic as others or did not like the program content. The reason why friends join organized programs was that they liked to meet people.

Publicizing Programs

Participants had a variety of ideas about how to publicize programs. Several mentioned advertising (fliers, posters), school, newspapers, person-to-person (via mail, door-to-door, or telephone), and friends.

Black females suggested that the best way to publicize activity news was by using magazines such as *Teen, Seventeen, Sweet Sixteen, RAP, Essence, Ebony,* and *Jet.* They also mentioned print -- posters, fliers, notices in apartment buildings, and school -- via teachers, announcements, and counselors.

Older black males suggested posters on utility poles, radio announcements, print (posters, fliers, notices in grocery stores), and through school (teachers, announcements, counselors).

Encouraging Others to Participate

To encourage a friend to participate, black females would say such things as "You'll like it," "I'll be there," "You'll have fun" and "You'll know people there." White females would describe the things they did and the people or drag a friend along and tell them they could meet guys. Vietnamese females said they would tell a friend that she would have fun, participate in activities, and make new friends.

Vietnamese males would first tell a friend about sports, a tactic that would make it exciting for a friend to join. Central American males said that friends could usually get friends to join by applying peer pressure. White males said they would tell a friend all the options, tell him that his friends were there, and tell him it was fun.

GENDER SEPARATION

The older black and white female participants preferred gender-segregated activities. White females said it was good for sports to be separated by sex and that it would be interesting to hear the boys' perspective. Activities just for girls should be peer groups and sports.

Black females said that boys were disruptive and impolite and that the sexes did not share the same interests. When asked about all-girl program content, black females wanted a "big sister club" where they could discuss personal issues such as problems at home, pregnancy and birth control, their periods, drugs, relationships, and sex. Another aspect of the club could deal with cosmetology, home economics, shopping help, and doing sports activities.

Vietnamese females were mixed about boys joining an activity but unanimously agreed that their friends would rather join an all-girl program. In discussing types of all-girl programs, they mentioned "girl talk," "place to share feelings," "go places," and "discuss differences between boys and girls."

Only Central American females said they would rather have girls and boys together and could think of no program just for girls.

Three of the male groups were in favor of co-ed activities, one strongly so, perhaps because these boys are enrolled in a parochial school that is segregated by sex. This group said "we're interested in girls!" and had several suggestions for co-ed activities (CPR with "mouth-to-mouth breathing," sex education classes, etc.). When pressed, these boys suggested all-boy programs such as "how to" classes (driving, meeting girls, getting a job), sex education classes, and sports programs (boxing, football). This group had a strong desire to be in sanctioned activities with girls; many current free-time activities were segregated by sex and they wanted more co-ed activities.

Older black males said girls made programs more interesting ("We need to be together with girls," "We need to understand them and get their respect").

White males said that co-ed activities were better and that they like girls. When asked about programs just for boys, they mentioned sports, Boy Scouts, and life saving lessons.

Vietnamese males said it didn't matter if the program was gender specific. They suggested all-boys programs such as Boys Club, soccer, football, climbing, fencing, and baseball.

Central American males said they would like girls in all activities except sports. They did say, however, that "the girls could be cheerleaders while the boys play sports."

CONTENT PREFERENCES

Participants were asked to sort 11 content cards in order of preference.

Females

The most popular choice was helping other people, a marked contrast to participants' discussion in which community service was frequently dismissed. In addition, females were interested in having someone to talk to about personal things, and learning how to handle stress. Other choices were getting help with homework, learning about health and sexuality, and learning self-defense.

For some girls, "personal things" were quite serious one wrote in "how to tell you parents you're pregnant."

All girls expressed an interest in some of the content preference choices offered, reflecting the diversity of their needs and interests.

Males

For the males, the clear first choice was getting help with homework. Running a distant second were learning job skills, learning about health and sexuality, and getting a job to make money. Also mentioned by several were learning how to handle violence, talking about personal things, learning about cultural heritage, and self defense. One wrote in learning how to read.

Some males cited their least preferred choices as learning about cultural heritage, learning to be a leader and learning about health and sexuality. Frequently, disinterest was caused by a perception that youth already possessed specific skills, such as knowing how to handle stress.

ADULTS WHO RUN PROGRAMS

Adults Youth Like

Males and females showed little difference in their answers regarding adult leaders. Participants mentioned a variety of adults they liked or respected.

White males liked a next-door neighbor (plays games), a 21-year-old guy (plays baseball), dad's friend (fun to be around, plays with him), aunt's brother (good at baseball, funny), sister's boyfriend (goes fishing with him, good friends), uncles (play sports, funny), and a friend (takes to the movies).

Vietnamese males mentioned several teachers, specifically their art and physical education teachers ("Summer school teachers give you things").

Older black males liked or respected parents and grandparents.

Several Central American females mentioned teachers ("Because if people are unhappy, she makes them happy,"), a fourth grade teacher ("Because when I had problems, she helped me"), and an uncle ("Because he's nice to me and when I'm sad he buys me things"). Regarding the Girl Scout leaders -- "She was nice to us," "They helped us with our problems," and "They gave us treats."

White females mentioned a sister (look up to her, always been there), grandmother, aunt, school administrator (helps with problems), coaches (helps and listens), and good friend (trusts).

Vietnamese females mentioned parents, aunt ("She teaches nice things"), brother, mother's friend (helps with homework and English), and teacher (two said she was beautiful).

Black females said they liked or respect teachers, mentors, family members other than parents, camp leaders, and cheerleaders.

Ideal Adult Leader

In discussing characteristics of an ideal adult leader, participants in several groups mentioned the need for a leader to be of their same ethnic group or at least to be bilingual.

Central American males were unanimous in feeling that a bilingual man and woman should run the ideal center. If not bilingual, they should at least know English. Some felt the leader should be from El Salvador. (Note: A majority of Central American participants were from El Salvador.)

Vietnamese males said a good leader should be from the same country and speak the same language. Vietnamese females said that the leader should be Asian and bilingual. This sentiment may only hold true for youth whose families have recently immigrated.

In several cases, participants suggested that leaders should be of the same sex as the group members (Asian females), but this was generally not important.

Older black males said that while age and sex didn't matter (they cited the example of a female Maryland basketball coach), they would not be comfortable with a gay adult leader. While initially saying that race didn't matter, they later said they preferred blacks but that other races would be okay "as long as they speak good English and don't eat dogs." This racial slur is indicative of racial tensions that have begun to accelerate between Washington's black and Korean communities.

Central American males said that adults in an ideal center should be friendly, have a nice personality, be responsible, and over 20 years old.

Older black males described a good adult leader as one who corrected youth when they were wrong, stopped you when you were doing wrong, gave good advice, treated everybody equally, preached at you to "do the right thing," was like a coach who showed you the right way to play ball, was someone you can look up to, by example, was strong, listened, and let you do your thing.

Younger black males described a good or great adult leader as one who had a good education, knew how to protect you, was good at teaching, had authority, and was someone you could respect.

White females mentioned characteristics of an ideal adult leader which included one who was patient, understanding, easy to be with, open, easy to talk to, caring and friendly, and who was not condescending. They also preferred a leader who took charge, knew when enough was enough, was mature, fair (no favorites), liked you for what you were, and didn't expect too much.

Vietnamese females mentioned a leader who was nice, smart, clever and funny, and who takes them places. They preferred a Vietnamese, bilingual female.

Black females said a great adult was one who could talk to you and understood your point of view, wouldn't judge you, had been through what you had and gave examples, was positive and respectful, treated you fairly, gave you hints that worked, was over 18 and under 60, and had patience. Other characteristics included someone who tells meaningful short, funny stories, was fun -- had a good sense of humor, understood your age group, didn't have a hot temper, cared, listened, was not boring, related to you as a person, and answered questions truthfully.

Leadership Traits Perceived as Being Negative

Older black males characterized a poor adult leader as one who tried to con you and used pressure, had no respect for you, practiced racism, did wrong but told you to do right, showed favoritism, and thought only they were superior.

Younger black males described a poor adult leader as one who didn't care about young people, used profanity, or used drugs.

According to white females, a bad program leader was lackadaisical, negative, pessimistic, impatient, and had unreasonable expectations.

According to black females, a poor leader was one who doesn't listen, was rude, puts you down, nags, got on your case, was unfair to you, was disrespectful, embarrassed you, and was petty.

Adults Whom Youth Disliked

Adults that participants disliked included certain teachers and various relatives, as well as people who yell, blame kids, and generally do not fit into the ideal role model.

White males mentioned those who yell, blame kids, are "messed up," strict, think their children are better, blame other children, have a mean attitude, the bus driver who acts like a hippie, and adults who are prejudiced.

Central American males said that they did not like adults when they were mean, always told you what to do, hit you, had a bad sense of humor, didn't allow you to do things, and made a big deal out of nothing.

Central American females described adults they did not like as those who made them stay after school to do homework, told other people what they had said, or weren't nice to them. Specifically, participants mentioned teachers -- "Because he made me go out of the room and I didn't do anything," "She always gives us too much work," "If we are playing class, she starts screaming and says you have to do this and that," "I don't like homework because after school I have to babysit and how can I babysit and do homework?" and "Because if I don't do my homework, she makes me stay after school."

White females mentioned teachers (too old, don't understand, don't care, yell, go out of their way to be mean, always right, annoying), aunt and uncle (fake, can't be around them), adults who try to hang out with kids (nosey, try to act young), grandparents, brother's girlfriend (around too much, no privacy), adult co-workers (thought we were sub-human), father (doesn't care, lost touch), and friend's mom (nosey, meddlesome, bossy).

Ideal Age

Suggested ages for an adult leader ranged from 18 to 20, 20 to 30, and from 21 to 50. Participants said that although a younger person could relate to them better, was up on the latest trends and was more fun and sympathetic, an older person was more understanding because they were experienced and knew the rules.

The majority of white males gave 20 as the ideal age. Others preferred a teenager in high school or college because they could better demonstrate athletic techniques and had more time and energy.

Vietnamese males said the leader should be 18 to 20; parents' age would be too old.

Older black males said age didn't matter as long as the leader wanted to work with kids, had experience, and was hip (understood needs, wants and ways of kids).

Young black males said that the adult leader's age was important and should be over 21.

Central American females gave mixed responses about the age of a leader. Some said the leader should be closer to the moderator's age (early forties) -- like a mother because older people were smarter and knew more things. Others felt a leader should be closer to the peer

moderator's age (high school age) because she could understand how they felt about things. Two participants said the age should be in between.

White females also gave varied answers, from mid-twenties to fifty. They felt that an appropriate age depended on the program being offered and the experience necessary.

Vietnamese females suggested ages between 20 and 30. Several said an older person would be wiser.

Black females said that someone under 20 understood them because the individual was closer to their age, was hip, was more fun, "thinks like me," and was sympathetic. Someone over 20 sometimes understood because of experiences and knew the rules and stuck to them.

Help at School

When asked about individuals at school to whom they can turn with problems, participants mentioned specific teachers, counselors, principals, friends, and "no one."

White males said "no one," a social studies teacher (real nice, listens, is smart), a physical education teacher (understanding), counselors (nice), and a science teacher (understands what you're saying.)

Central American females mentioned a teacher, a counselor, and nobody. They liked the teacher because "She understands whatever I tell her," and "She understands my feelings."

White females mentioned an administrator and a teacher who were caring, patient, and friendly.

Vietnamese females mentioned a friend, teacher, counselor, and principal.

IDEAL CENTER

Participants were asked to discuss what program components they would provide if they were in charge of a center.

Females

Female groups mentioned female-oriented programs – a place for girls to talk about such things as their periods, sex, boys, birth control, and condoms. They wanted a place to talk

about family and other problems, general counseling, help with work and feelings, and teen peer groups. They wanted trips to fun events, field trips and trips to the zoo. They wanted acting lessons, painting and sculpting classes, an environmental group, music and dance lessons, and to play Nintendo. They wanted a place to participate in sports – swimming, roller skating, basketball, volleyball, football, soccer, tennis, exercise, dodgeball, and access to park land. They wanted music and dances, parties, a clothing store, and a restaurant/snack shop.

Black females named all-woman programs; a place for girls to be girls and talk about girl things like your period, sex, boys, birth control and condoms; some place to talk about family problems; and trips to fun events. They also named a place to learn acting; a suggestion box; a place to be yourself; a swimming pool; a clothing store; and a restaurant/snack shop.

Central American females wanted an ideal center with someone to talk about their problems and someone to help them with work. Fun activities would include parties, swimming, soccer, tennis, a park, dodgeball, Nintendo, dancing, exercise, and going to the zoo.

White females said the ideal center would provide teen-peer groups, sports, counseling, painting and sculpting class, dance and music lessons, dances, an environmental group, and field trips.

Vietnamese females wanted an ideal center to have a swimming pool, roller skating rink, basketball, volleyball, football, soccer, music, and dances.

Males

Central American males wanted a place to discuss subjects such as health education (the group was nearly unanimous on this subject, although 'health education' was not defined; one suspects that, like girls, boys are interested in issues of human sexuality and their own maturation) and academic subjects including reading, math, English, humanities, world literature, geography, and global issues.

They said an ideal center should also include winter and summer soccer leagues, as well as basketball and baseball leagues. To spread the word about the center, Central American males would work through the schools and send letters in Spanish and English to students and parents.

White males named swimming, pool, soccer, counseling, video arcades, golf course, and batting cages as being part of an ideal center. They also listed having a snack bar, basketball, hockey, football, weight room, cafeteria, pool and jacuzzi, computers, store, and all sports. They also wanted help with school work and with family problems, a sport shop, a "weight losing room," and a library.

Older black males said that the center should be a place that cared for kids, with a staff who took time to listen and talk about problems. It should be friendly and have a "big brother" feeling; it should get families involved. It should be a place where individuals were not excluded if they couldn't pay the dues and where every kid got a chance to play sports.

Older black males described their ideal program as a "place of their own" that would include the following activities a summer camp called "Father's Home," counseling from older men (father figures), "a love place . . . where there is no killing," a teen club with parties, homework, coaching, and a place to watch movies and videos.

Younger black males wanted lots of basketball courts, a big football field, a pool, a go-cart course, a video arcade, movies, a place to meet girls, and a fast-food spot.

Vietnamese males wanted a center where they can do something daily and would be allowed to choose appropriate activities.

APPENDIX F

DETAILED FINDINGS FROM RURAL GROUPS

HOW TIME IS SPENT AFTER SCHOOL

The moderator asked participants to describe how they spend their time after school, on the weekends, and during the summer.

After-School and Weekends

Males consistently mentioned sports and athletic activities as the most popular choice for after school activities. Sports were defined as traditional team sports as well as some individual sports (swimming and weight lifting).

White males mentioned participation in other organized activities such as drama clubs, church activities (choir, altar boy), and participation on a committee to set up a community center. There were individuals who mentioned skeet shooting, fishing, and karate. On the weekends, white males participated in the sports and activities previously mentioned, as well as in skeet shooting, fishing, hockey, and weight lifting.

Older black males said that they also did their homework, studied, slept, watched TV, played video games, and raced remote control cars. They also participated in "Career Capers," a community-sponsored job and career program. Some participated in church-related or sponsored activities.

Other after-school activities mentioned by younger black males were watching television, sleeping, doing chores, and eating. After-school activities were generally sports programs sponsored by schools or the local recreational center. On weekends, younger black males played football or skated at a local skating rink. One mentioned visiting his father; others included doing chores and going to a local amusement park.

All female groups mentioned participation in sports activities as well. Again, this included traditional organized team sports as well as individual activities (skating, tennis, frisbee and swimming). In addition, white females mentioned cheerleading and black females mentioned watching organized sports.

In addition to sports (softball, basketball, and skating), black females mentioned doing homework, talking on the telephone, and being with friends. Also mentioned were participating in a talent show, playing Nintendo, going to the movies, and shopping. They seemed to favor informal social activities rather than organized activities. To these girls, shopping does not necessarily mean buying – instead it meant walking around the mall, eating, and trying on clothes. As for weekend activities, black females mentioned home-based activities such as watching television, doing chores, and gardening; social activities such as parties, eating out, visiting friends, going to the mall or movies; and sports such as indoor and outdoor skating, bike riding, basketball, and going to a local amusement park. Black females generally preferred informal activities; for example, meeting boys was a favorite pastime.

Central American females mentioned sports activities (basketball, swimming, volleyball, softball, soccer, and frisbee) in addition to home-based activities such as cleaning house and cooking dinner. They also mentioned traditional activities such as doing homework, talking on the telephone, going to the park, and shopping. Weekend activities included going to parties and to church (also church youth group), seeing friends, shopping, eating out, going to the movies, visiting a local amusement park, swimming, watching television and listening to music. Participants said they played sports on the playground at school, but were not part of school athletic programs. Central American females were also involved in a youth program at their church.

White females mentioned sports (skating, tennis, cheerleading, basketball, softball, and sledding). In addition, they mentioned the 4-H Club where they participate in a variety of sports and crafts programs. In addition, talking on the telephone and watching television were mentioned. One participant said that she traveled one hour twice a week to participate on an AAU basketball team.

Community and School-Sponsored Activities

Most boys said that they participated in sports programs sponsored by their communities or schools. Females also mentioned participation in sponsored programs. However, only the White females mentioned participating in organized sports activities. Black and Central American females preferred informal social activities.

The young people described sports programs or activities that were sponsored by or held at recreational centers, schools, and churches. White males had a discussion about where these activities were held and went on to say that the physical surroundings were not important to them.

Participants generally had no difficulty in joining programs. Sign-up requirements mentioned were providing a birth certificate for sports and completing an application. A member of the

White male group was concerned that cost might prohibit some people from signing up. Younger black males said that some sports teams had weight, age, and fee requirements.

Regarding staying in a program, white males mentioned the need to make a time commitment; participants were asked to leave if they missed too many practices. Slipping grades and not enough homework time were also reasons for quitting an activity. The older Black males mentioned being too old for programs or exceeding weight limits. Younger Black males mentioned that hockey was only available during the school year, so they couldn't stay in the program if it wasn't offered.

In the Central American female group, only one participant had belonged to a community organization – Girl Scouts. Her babysitter had been the leader and her best friend had been in the group. No others could recall belonging to other organizations.

Younger black males were particularly fond of Mr. Reese, a community leader and "neighborhood Dad," who organizes activities and opened his home to them.

In discussing daily home responsibilities, Central American females mentioned cooking and cleaning, watching siblings, going to the store, and "everything."

Summer Activities

Most participants continued to participate in activities that interested them at other times during the year. In addition, they traveled, went to camp, and held summer jobs.

Younger black males said that most of the activities available during the school year were also available during the summer through the recreational center. They also mentioned going rollerskating at a local rink and participating in a Career Capers camp.

Older black males mentioned playing the same sports during the summer as during the rest of the year, but added kickball. They went to the recreational center, swam, lifted weights, and played pool. In addition, they mentioned summer jobs (janitorial, cutting grass). Some attended camps, either day- or sleep-over camps.

White males participated in activities similar to school-year activities, but placed more emphasis on free time. They mentioned family travel (beach, other vacation spots) and community day trips (amusement parks and other nearby attractions). Home-based activities were sleeping in, sitting around home, walks, visiting friends, and going to the mall. Other activities also included swim team, previously mentioned athletics, camps (church and sports), and parties.

Community-sponsored day trips were popular among white males, who found out about such activities through friends, family, and community newspapers. One recent arrival to the area had not heard of these activities.

White females mentioned sporting activities such as swimming, tennis, boating, and roller skating; organized activities such as church (amusement park trips), Girl Scouts (hiking trips), 4-H club (swimming, day trips), organized games at the elementary school, cheerleading camp, library reading program, and home-based and family activities (friends' houses, vacations, beach).

Central American females mentioned attending a summer camp, taking music lessons, going to the fair and to parties, attending fireworks, visiting the beach, traveling, camping with family, and working.

Black females mentioned local amusement and theme parks, skating, swimming, elementary school recreation program, beach, home, parties, football, sports, and vacation. Participants were more interested in going to amusement parks where they were likely to meet boys.

Central American females mentioned a summer day camp sponsored by their school. Signing up consisted of completing a form and attending every Tuesday and Thursday. (Apparently, an attendance roll of some kind was maintained.) Participants mentioned hearing about music lessons from a parent and from friends; music lessons involve paying a fee. Knowledge of other programs included programs for teenage mothers and English classes. Participants knew of no other programs.

ACTIVITY PREFERENCES

Participants were asked to sort activities into what they would like to do most and least.

Females

Females listed a variety of activities among their preferences. White females (5) preferred athletics – tennis, swimming, cheerleading, baseball, soccer, hiking, basketball, softball, and skating. A few chose hanging out with friends and going to the mall.

Black females chose hanging out with friends. Others chose listening to music/concerts and meeting boys. Participants stated that socializing was their preferred activity.

Each member of the Central American female group made a different choice athletics, going to new places, hanging out with friends, going to the mall, and watching TV.

Least favored by white females were working part-time, playing video games, and performing community service; they called the latter two options boring and not fun.

Black females disliked part time work, painting/drawing and community service -- which they viewed as clean-up projects.

Central American females least liked taking music or dance lessons, which they perceived as boring; hanging out with friends; providing community service; and cleaning house.

Males

Males preferred athletics, although not overwhelmingly so, as their comments about after-school and weekend activities suggested. Most younger and older black males chose athletics, although a few chose working part time. A few boys wrote in skeet shooting and church-related events as being favorites.

Taking music, dance, or painting lessons and participating in community service activities were frequently cited as least-favored options. Reasons for these selections included, "I don't want to help out in the community -- what could I do?", "I know how to dance," and "Either you have natural ability to draw or not . . . a class won't really help." Some felt that community service would draw from their already precious free time; some said that their days are filled by school, homework, and familial duties.

ISSUES REGARDING PARTICIPATION

How They Learn About/Decide to Attend Organized Activities

Participants generally heard about activities through word-of-mouth, school newspapers or announcements on school public address systems, local newspapers, and fliers. Younger Black males mentioned reading fliers at places they frequented such as a skating rink.

White males learn about activities from school newspapers and announcements on the public address system. They also mentioned local newspapers.

Publicizing Programs

Some females suggested posting fliers in neighborhoods. Among white females, there was confusion about how to find out about activities that were not in school because most activities were school-based.

White males said that community activities were well publicized and had no additional ideas. However, older black males said the ideal media would be posters and word-of-mouth. Information in the newspaper should be in the comics, and on the sports page or front page.

Although younger black males said word-of-mouth worked best, they thought a celebrity endorsement (Michael Jordan) would encourage many to join. They also said the best method of communication would be through friends or a trusted adult.

Why They Participate

White males said being with friends was not their main reason for participating -- in fact, having a friend could inhibit them, prevent them from exploring, and making new friends. Yet older black males said it was difficult to fit in without knowing someone in the program. Two brothers, recently arrived from Germany, said that they had difficulty breaking into the local group. Another participant said that he went to the skating rink three times before anyone would talk to him.

Central American females said it was important to know people at activities or programs, but that they also used them as a place to meet new friends.

Black females had no interest in some activities (Girl Scouts, croquet) but were interested in others not available in their community (ice skating, camping, bowling).

GENDER SEPARATION

Black females were opposed to co-ed programs. They did not want to be embarrassed in front of boys. White females, however, thought that social activities should be co-ed. They disagreed about whether or not sports and cheerleading should be girls only; some said the certain situations in their communities (girls can be cheerleaders but cannot play football) are sexist.

White males preferred male-only sports and co-ed social (including dramatics) activities. Older black males unanimously agreed that programs should be co-ed. Younger black males

were adamant about wanting to include girls in everything. They associated gender separation with sexism, which they consider to be bad as racism.

CONTENT PREFERENCES

Participants were asked to sort content cards in order of preference.

Females

Despite their aversion to community service in discussion, in sorting content cards, community service (defined as helping other people) was frequently a favorite activity. Reasons for this included, "Because some people don't have anybody to help them with their problems." Some wanted to obtain help with homework, to talk about family problems or personal matters, and to learn about health and sexuality. One black female wanted to learn self-defense skills, an option that was periodically listed as a second choice by other girls.

Girls varied in their categorization of least-favored activities, which included homework help, learning about health, sexuality, and cultural heritage, and learning job skills. Others were disinterested in learning leadership skills, in learning how to handle violence, and in learning how to handle stress. Nonetheless, in discussion, some of these content areas emerged as areas of great interest.

Males

Despite their spoken interest in sports activities, when asked to sort content cards by preference, boys chose a variety of programs, such as learning leadership skills, getting help with homework, learning how to handle violence, helping other people, learning self-defense, learning job skills. Several mentioned wanting to learn karate to protect themselves from other boys. Like the females, the males included "helping other people" in the card sort, although in discussion, they generally dismissed performing community service activities.

Boys appeared to be least interested in having a forum in which to talk to others about issues such as family problems or personal things. They did not express a great deal of interest in learning about how to handle violence or stress.

Younger black males ranked learning about their cultural heritage last. They associated learning about their cultural heritage with school, considered it boring and did not relate it to themselves.

ADULTS WHO RUN PROGRAMS

Adults Whom Youth Like

Black females listed positive adult traits as liking what youth like; being in their twenties, able to drive, funny, and with a good sense of humor, a good sport, nice and understanding, and able to keep a confidence. Other traits also included someone they could talk to and trust; someone who wouldn't laugh at them; someone who was responsible, protective, generous, and included everybody.

White females listed positive adult traits as having a sense of humor, being nice and a good listener, not yelling, being able to act like a kid, being "firm but gentle" and intelligent. An ideal adult was not strict, bossy or mean, and did not pick on kids.

Central American females listed family members and friends as adults they liked. They liked adults who helped them with their problems and with homework, took them places, did things for them, did not get involved in family problems, were not involved in drugs and were nice.

White males listed positive adult traits as a willingness to talk and listen, being nice (talks to teens on their level, doesn't talk down), being interested in what teens were interested in (sports), doing favors for kids such as loaning sports equipment and taking them places.

In addition to the traits listed above, some of the older black males described an adult they liked personified by a local community leader who was trustworthy and had high energy.

Ideal Adult Leader

Black females felt a good program leader should understand people, have a good attitude, be helpful and polite, be fair and not discriminatory, be respectful yet funny, not be hard-headed and not be self-important. Many of these attributes described adults who work at the recreational center. Black females were not concerned about the leader's gender.

Training and experience were not important to white females. Rather, good leadership skills included being a good organizer, a good listener and a confidante; being fun-loving and fair; and keeping people in line. They preferred adults who encouraged them.

Central American females described an ideal adult leader as someone who was responsible, kind, experienced, understanding, nice, and sensitive. They seem to feel that an older adult would possess many of these attributes.

White males said a good leader was competent in the activity he was leading, particularly sports. They felt the leader's gender was not important, although they preferred male leaders for sports.

Older black males listed a good adult leader as one who was a good coach or teacher, drove them places, respected youth, did not embarrass them and supported them. Older black males also wanted someone who would keep the neighborhood clean, who went along with youths' ideas, was under fifty, didn't play favorites, talked to young people on their level, took time to listen, answered questions, learned as well as taught, set an example, and didn't push kids beyond their abilities.

For younger black males, the ideal leader was embodied in a community leader called Reese. He was religious, honest, organized activities, had a lot of energy, was sharing and concerned. Reese's style of discipline was not just telling them to stop but giving an example of why their behavior was unacceptable.

As for the age of the ideal leader, there was little agreement among groups. Most felt that leaders of various ages offered various benefits -- teens had similar interests but older people were better able to handle difficult situations. Black and Central American females gave a variety of ages for an ideal leader; white females preferred a leader closer to their own age.

White males said a leader should be young enough to relate to kids and remember what it was like to be a kid. Some suggested people in their twenties or thirties; others had no preference. Having someone older and competent with training and experience was important.

Older black males said age didn't matter as long as the leader had experience. They felt two kinds of leaders were needed: one close to their own age, and one older and more experienced.

Younger black males saw advantages in teenage and adult leaders. The youthful leader could participate on their level, particularly in sports; however, a teen leader might not be as dedicated and would go "partying" on weekends. The ideal adult would be in his late twenties or early thirties (like Mr. Reese); this adult might be too old to play games, but he would be there for them.